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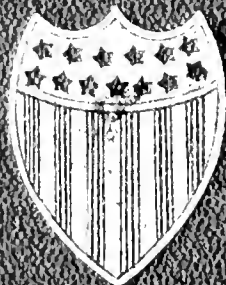


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PLAIN COUNSELS FOR FREEDMEN.



BY BREVET MAJ. GEN. C. B. FISK.



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PLAIN COUNSELS

FOR

F R E E D M E N :

IN SIXTEEN BRIEF LECTURES.

BY

BREVET MAJOR-GENERAL

CLINTON B. FISK.



PUBLISHED BY THE
AMERICAN TRACT SOCIETY,

23 CORNHILL, BOSTON.

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1866, by the

AMERICAN TRACT SOCIETY,

In the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the District of Massachusetts.

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DEDICATION.



TO THE

FREEDMEN OF THE UNITED STATES,

Now happily released from the house of bondage, and fairly set forward in the path of progress, these Plain Counsels are respectfully and affectionately dedicated by one who has marched with them through the Red Sea of strife, sympathized with them in all their sufferings, labored incessantly for their well-being, rejoiced in their prosperity, and who believes that, guided by the pillar of cloud by day, and of fire by night, they will reach the Promised Land.

CLINTON B. FISK,

*Brevet Major-General U. S. Volunteers, and Assistant Commissioner
in the Freedmen's Bureau.*

NASHVILLE, TENN., *March 1, 1866.*

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PLAIN COUNSELS.

LECTURE I.

ON FREEDOM.

EVERY man is born into the world with the right to his own life, to personal liberty, and to inherit, earn, own, and hold property. These rights are given to him by the great God ; not because he is a white man, a red man, or a black man, but because he is a MAN.

A man may lose his right to life, by murder ; to liberty, by theft ; and to property in many ways ; but he loses these rights for himself alone, and not for his children, his neighbors, or his race. God means that every child born shall have a fair chance ; and to take away from any one any of the rights named, before any wrong is done, is a high crime.

Now, for hundreds of years, these rights were taken from you. You were slaves.

You were owned, bought, and sold like cattle and horses. You could not defend your own life, could not claim your liberty, nor own any property. It is true, your masters sometimes allowed you to have a little property, and to call it yours, but the law did not give it to you, and you could not will it to your children. Indeed, your children were not yours, but were the property of your masters, and they had the power to take them from you and to sell them to whomsoever they pleased.

But that day has passed for ever! The great law — called the CONSTITUTION — makes every man in America free! Our country's flag, the glorious star-spangled banner, floats proudly over a free people. A slave can not breathe our air. When he touches our shores his fetters break, his chains fall off, and he becomes a man. The year of Jubilee has come, and you have all seen it, and heard the joyful news.

For this great salvation — this mighty deliverance — you should thank God, every day

and every night; for it is He who has broken open your prison doors, taken off your chains, and brought you out into the light, and glory, and bliss, of freedom. When the children of Israel were delivered from Pharaoh, and taken safely across the Red Sea, they sang and shouted, — “The Lord hath triumphed gloriously.” Your emancipation is the Lord’s doings. Bless his name for ever and ever!

Oh, you should prize your freedom above gold, for it has cost rivers of blood! Go where you will, your eyes will behold great battle-fields, and the graves of brave men, who fell in the mighty struggle which made you free. During the bloody gigantic contest, there has been mourning in tens of thousands of homes, in the North and in the South, and millions now mourn the loss of those they will never see again on earth.

You can not be too glad that you are free; that your hands, your head, your heart, are your own; and you should talk about freedom to your children, and your children’s children, and teach them to love it more than life.

LECTURE II.

ABOUT YOUR OLD MASTER.

I HAVE a few words to say to you about your old master. It may be he was a very good master, or it may be he was not so good as he might have been, but that is all past now; he is your master no longer, and I earnestly advise you to live on good terms with him.

He has had a hard time of it, during the war, as well as yourselves. His wealth has melted away like wax before the fire. His near relatives, and in many cases his sons, have died on the field of battle, or have been crippled for life, and the Government will grant no pensions in their cases, because they fought not under its flag. You have been made free against his will, and all the money he paid for you might better have been sunk in the bottom of the sea.

Now it is natural that he should feel sore:

that he should grieve over his loss; that he should be slow to adapt himself to the new state of things; and that he should be some years in putting off the airs and manners of a master, just as you find it hard to shake off the habits of slaves.

It is natural, too, that he should feel severe toward you. It is true you did not, in your servitude, agitate the questions of the day; you did not meddle with politics; you were neither Republican nor Democratic; you did not begin the war; and he admits that you behaved all through the conflict in a very proper manner. Still, whenever he sees you he can not but think of the great change, and can not avoid blaming you for it, although his better judgment tells him he ought to praise, rather than blame you.

You must think of these things, and think kindly of your old master. You have grown up with him, it may be, on the same plantation. Do not fall out now, but join your interests if you can, and live and die together.


You want his money or lands and he

wants your labor. He is not able to do without you, and you will, in most cases, find him as kind, honest, and liberal as other men. Indeed he has for you a kind of family affection, and in spite of this bad feeling, I have noticed, he desires to see you do well in life. Be frank, then, with him, and treat him with respect.

Do not think that, in order to be free, you must fall out with your old master, gather up your bundles and trudge off to a strange city. This is a great mistake. As a general rule, you can be as free and as happy in your old home, for the present, as any where else in the world.

LECTURE III.

ABOUT WHITE FOLKS.

S you very well know, some white folks are bad, others are good, and many are of no account either way; and in these respects they are very much like the colored folks. Now, as you and your children will live among them,—in the same towns and on the same farms,—it is best for you and for them that you live on real good terms.

White people have old, strong prejudices, and you should avoid every thing you can which will inflame those prejudices. You know how easy it is to hurt a sore toe. Prejudices are like tender toes. Do not step on them when it is possible to avoid it. It can do you no good and may do much harm. It is better to have the good will than the ill will of even a dog. Strive to deserve the good will of all the white people.

If bad men make insulting remarks about you, shut your ears, and do not hear them. Pass on about your business. Words will not hurt you much, or if they do grieve you, God will comfort and heal you. It takes two to make a quarrel; and if you are bent on being good and kind, and return soft answers to hard words and good for evil, you will have few troubles with white men, and nearly all men will be kind to you and esteem you.

Some white men will put on airs, and look down on you. Now, instead of putting on airs, too, and saying, "I am as good as you are," it is better to say nothing, or if you do answer, to say, "I am not as good as I ought to be, as I want to be, and as I hope to be."

White men are very much influenced by a man's success in making a good living, and if you are thrifty and get on well in the world, they can not help respecting you. They make very polite bows to Frank P. and to Mr. S. because they have money in the bank.

LECTURE IV.

ABOUT YOURSELF.

WHEN a man sets out in life with no capital but himself, he must be a pretty good fellow, or he will break up. Now, sit down, and let me tell you a few home truths.

You can not afford to smoke fine cigars. I say nothing of the *wrong*, but of the *cost*. Cigars cost, at least, ten cents apiece. Suppose you smoke only four a day,—that is forty cents a day,—two dollars and eighty cents a week,—twelve dollars and thirteen cents a month,—one hundred and forty-five dollars and sixty cents a year! This would buy you a fine mule, or a good wagon, or a lot of ground.

You can not afford to drink any kind of spirituous or malt liquors. To say nothing of their bad effects on your health and morals, you can not, in justice to yourself, pay what

they will cost. Three glasses of beer a day would be thirty cents, — two dollars and ten cents per week, — nine dollars and ten cents per month, — one hundred and nine dollars and twenty cents per year! But, if you drink at all, you will want something stronger than beer and more costly, and you will waste your time at drinking saloons, fall into bad company, and, ten chances to one, become a miserable, bloated, wheezing, blear-eyed, drunkard. No, you can not afford to drink. "Touch not, taste not, handle not." Do not go into a liquor saloon. Let no man see you there. Go straight by without turning your head. God says, "Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging, and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise." "Look not upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth its color in the cup, when it moveth itself aright: at the last it biteth like a serpent and stingeth like an adder." If you want a clear head and a strong arm, self-respect, and money in your pocket, swear, and keep the oath, that you will never take a dram.

You can not afford to spend money for useless dress and ornaments. You need tools, horses, plows, books, lands, education, — every thing, before costly rings, watch-chains, and expensive apparel. Do not waste your earnings on your person. Dress well, but in cheap, plain apparel. After you get a good home paid for, and money in the bank, you can indulge your taste or your vanity, but not now.

You can not afford to be idle. Time is money. Every day you lose sets you back two or three days. Shake off sloth, then, rise early, roll up your sleeves, and quit yourself like a man. The world is full of profitable work and business, and nothing is impossible to the industrious and persevering. Idleness destroys a man's health, weakens him, shortens his life, makes him feel mean, and sends him on a short road to ruin.

Every man is, under God, just what he makes himself; it matters not whether he be white or colored. Frederick Douglas was born a slave and had no friend to help him;

but, by dint of hard work, he has made himself a man, — a wise, strong, eloquent man. Now you have yourself in charge, and I want you to make a man of yourself. Will you do it?

LECTURE V.

TO YOUNG MEN.

HAVE you ever seen a ship well laden, with canvas spread, putting out to sea under a favorable wind? One always looks with interest upon such a spectacle, for it is beautiful and inspiring; but a shadow flits across the mind at the thought of the dangers to which the beautiful vessel, now gliding so smoothly and sailing so proudly, will be exposed. The fierce tempest may tear its white sails to shreds, its strong masts may be broken, the hidden rocks may dash it in pieces, and the angry waves swallow it up.

It is with a feeling akin to this, that I look upon a young man starting out in life. He has health, vigor, intellect, and is full of hope and promise; but will he succeed, or will he, like an unfortunate vessel, be wrecked before he completes his voyage?

My first advice to you, is to *have a worthy aim*. Find out as soon as possible what you

may apply yourself to, and then set about it, and bring to it all your powers.

Many a man utterly fails because he fritters away his strength on useless and foolish experiments. He tries one thing and then another, diddles at this and diddles at that, and does nothing persistently and thoroughly.

Concentrate your strength, young men. A large ball of wool can not be thrown with any great force, but see that solid piece of metal in the cannon. You ignite the fuse. There is a flash like lightning, a noise loud as thunder, and the great ball strikes, like an avenging angel, miles away!

Now, you may say, you have not much strength, — you are ignorant and unlearned; but *fix your aim, and work to it with all your powers*, and I will guarantee you great success.

It may seem to you that there are obstacles in your way to success, which you can never remove; but, I tell you there is no obstacle which persistent work will not remove out of your way.



PETER PUFF AND BETTY SIMPLE.

Get good steady work as soon as you can. Do not attempt to live on the little jobs you may pick up about hotels and places of business. Do not be content with cold victuals, old clothes, and a blanket on the floor. Be a MAN. Earn money, and save it. Do not spend it at suppers, parties, and dances.

You have no time to spend in kicking up your heels. I speak of *time*, not of the right or wrong of dancing. You must learn to read, write, and cipher, in order to make you able to get on well in the world as a free man, and you will need all your leisure evenings to do this. It may be dull, hard work, for awhile, to sit down and study your book, while Peter Puff is hopping around the ball-room like a monkey, with Betty Simple, but it will become easy after awhile, and it will pay richly in the end.

Do not be in haste to get married. Wait until you are at least twenty-one years of age, and until you have a home for your wife. To marry a girl, and have no home to take her to, is foolish. She will soon regret that

she married you, and you will be sorry you married her. You will have a family of ragged children, and will be dogged around the world like a slave. Wait, I say, until you have a home for a wife, and then if you can find a pure, good woman, who will help you on in the world, marry her.

Avoid the company of bad men and women. Do not go with a man who does not care for the virtue of a woman. Keep away from gamblers. Never be found in the company of a woman who cares nothing about a good name. Lewd women will lead you down quick into hell.

Make up your mind to be good, to do right, and you will be happy. God will love you then as he loved Joseph, and will take as good care of you as he did of him.

LECTURE VI.

TO YOUNG WOMEN.

I HAVE spoken plainly to the young men, and much that I have said to them is equally applicable to you; but I desire your careful attention to a few additional suggestions.

There is no being on earth for whom I have a higher regard than a true woman; and if there is one thing I desire above another, it is, that the freed-women of this country, so long degraded and made merchandise of, may rise to the dignity and glory of true womanhood.

The Christian religion elevates woman from slavery and concubinage to an honorable and responsible place in society; makes her man's "helpmeet," companion, and equal; and requires of her the diligent cultivation of her mind, and of all the virtues.

You ought not to consider life a mere play or holiday. You have serious and important

work to do, and you should prepare yourselves for it, and devote yourselves to it, in the spirit of the noblest enthusiasm.

Do not think of getting married until you know how to knit and sew, to mend clothes and bake good bread, to keep a nice clean house and cultivate a garden, and to read and write. Many girls are so foolish as to think that if they can only get married, it matters little to whom, they will then be happy. But many, perhaps a majority, find in married life nothing but misery.

Let it be your first aim to make of yourself a true woman. Allow no man, under any pretense, to despoil you of your virtue. The brand of shame rests upon the brow of the unchaste woman. She is hated, even by those who are as bad as she is. No man can ever love her. Her parents mourn the day of her birth; her brothers hang their heads in very shame when she is named, and her sisters blush to own her. If in your slave life you have been careless of your morals, now that you are free, live as becomes a free Christian woman. Stamp a

lie upon the common remark, that colored women are all bad. Allow no white man to speak mean words to you, for he will leave you when he gets you into trouble, and would as lief see you die of hunger and cold as to live.

I warn you against those base white men who come to you with smooth words and good promises, while seeking to destroy you. They are slimy snakes in the grass. Do not hear them. Hate them as you hate the devil. You had better hang yourself by the neck until you are dead, than yield to them.

A true, honest, wise woman is the best work of God. She is man's strength, the charm of the household, the attraction of the social circle, the light of the church, and the brightest jewel in the Saviour's crown.

But a foolish, vain, cross, idle, slovenly woman is the meanest creature that ever blotted the fair creation of God.

LECTURE VII.

TO MARRIED FOLKS.

THE Bible tells us that God made Adam; and seeing that it was not good for him to be alone, he took a rib from his side, while he was asleep, and made a woman of it, whom he called Eve. He then waked Adam, brought Eve to him, and married them, and they spent their honey-moon in Eden.

You see from this story that marriage was instituted in Eden, by the great Being, and before sin was known in the world. It is sanctioned, too, both by the Law and the Gospel; and in all ages holy marriage has been blessed, while a violation of its laws has been visited by the most dreadful curses.

You see also that, from the beginning, God meant man should have but one wife, and a woman but one husband, and that



A HAPPY FAMILY.

“they twain should be one flesh.” God is angry with a man who has two or three wives, and with a woman who has several husbands.

When you were slaves you “took up” with each other, and were not taught what a bad thing it was to break God’s law of marriage. But now you can only be sorry for the past, and begin life anew, and on a pure foundation.

You who have been and are now living together as husband and wife, and have had children born to you, should be married according to law, as soon as possible. This will give you the civil rights of married persons, and will make your children the legal heirs to your property. If you have been living with several husbands, or with several wives, and can not agree among yourselves as to whom you should be legally married, take the case before some good man, let him hear all the circumstances, and decide the case, and then abide his decision in good faith and live pure lives in the future. God

will not wink at adultery and fornication among you now.

I will give you a few hints which will be useful to you, I think, and aid you in getting on well in married life.

1. *Husbands must provide for their families.* The Bible says "If any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel." Your wives will not love you if you do not provide bread and clothes for them.

They can not be happy and greet you with a kiss, when you come home, if they are hungry, ragged, and cold. Your children will not run to meet you, dance before you, and climb upon your knees, and call you "papa," if you make beggars of them.

By industry and economy you can soon provide a real good home, and plenty of food and clothing for your own family; and you should not rest until this is done. This is your first duty, and the most religious thing you can do.

Then *spend all your spare time at home.* This is a good rule. Some men have a way of going to saloons, shows, groceries, concerts, and theaters, and of leaving their wives and children night after night alone. This is mean, and bad. It disheartens a wife, makes children unhappy, and demoralizes husbands. No, you must learn to love home better than any other place on earth. It must gladden your heart when you think of it. You should always be thinking how you will make it prettier and happier than it is; and, whatever trouble you may have in the tug and bustle of life, you should be happy at home.

But wives must do their part, also. A man can not make a happy home if he has an idle, shiftless, and scolding wife.

A wife should take good care of her person, be clean, neat, tidy, and look as pretty as possible. I do not see how a man can love a slovenly woman, who goes about with her heels out of her stockings, her dress unpinned, her hair uncombed, with dirt under

her finger-nails, and snuff or tobacco in her mouth. And no man can long love a brawling wife. "A continual dropping will wear away a stone," and so an every-day scold will ruin the best temper. An ill-tempered woman will drive her husband to the saloon and to the evil one.

Eve was made for a "help meet." This is the word. A wife must do her very best to help her husband make a living. She can earn as much money sometimes as he can, and she can save money. A leak in the kitchen will drain a good fortune.

Much of the beauty and happiness of home depends on the good sense, economy, and industry of the wife.

But, as married life is a partnership, — sanctioned by heaven, cemented by love, and perpetual, — each member of the firm should be prompt and faithful. They should sit together in loving counsel, talk over their affairs, and find out all that can be done to advance their mutual well-being.

They should do this for each other's good.

and *for the good of their children*. But, of the dear children, I must speak in the next lecture.

But, before leaving you, let me entreat you to love each other. You have had your little troubles, no doubt, and all men and women have their faults. Let these be mended, forget the past, be kind to each other, strive to make each other happy, and let death alone part you.

When I die, I ask no greater favor of earth, than that the wife of my youth may sit by me, wipe the death damp from my brow, and whisper in my ear, "Dear one, we have been true to each other. You have been a dear good husband to me. Farewell! I will meet you in the beautiful land, and bring our children with me."

LECTURE VIII.

THE LITTLE FOLKS.

THE Lord loves little children, and when he was in the world he called them to him, laid his hands on them and blessed them; and he also said that it would be better for any man to have a millstone tied to his neck and to be thrown into the sea, than to lay a stumbling-block in a little child's path and cause it to fall. All good people love children, and will do all they can to make them happy. But parents are especially charged with the care, government, and education of their own children. Allow me to give to those of you who are parents, a few hints.

1. *Government of children.* No one can govern a child who can not govern himself; and parents must first learn to govern themselves. If the father and mother quarrel, the children will follow the bad example. If father and mother swear and drink and steal,

the children will not be slow in doing the same things. It is not possible for parents to place their children on a moral plane higher than that upon which they themselves walk.

Children must learn to obey. This is one of the first things to be taught them. But obedience should be enforced in love, not in anger. Love is stronger than passion, and can punish with much better effect.

Some parents fly into a passion with their children, call them hard names, and fall on them and beat them in a cruel manner. This is foolish and wicked. A parent should never strike a child in anger, never. Take time. Become perfectly calm. Make your wrongdoing child sit down by you, and hear you tell in quiet, tender voice, the evil thing done. Use the rod, if it must be done, in moderation. Let your child know that it is the deepest, tenderest love which directs every stroke.

Children must be taught to work. It is cruel to overtask them, and embitter their young lives thereby, but they need the disci-

pline of work. The best men in the world are those who acquired the habit of industry in their youth. Give your children reasonable tasks and see that they perform them. Never allow them to do their work shabbily, nor to leave it when half done. Teach them to do well, to do in time, all that is commanded. This will give them a certain force of character which will be of service to them, in any situation, through the whole of their lives. The ability and the will to work are, of themselves, more valuable than inherited wealth.

Children must be educated. What I have just said relates to education in its broadest sense; but I now speak of what is more generally understood by education.

You can not well over-estimate the value of education. It is worth more to your child than money. Education makes the mind stronger, gives greater vigor and endurance to the body, and adds to the years of a man's life. Then it opens numerous roads to competence and to wealth. An educated man gets higher wages than an uneducated man,

and he can do many more things. But I need not argue the question. Send your children to school while they are small, and keep them there as long as you are able. Do not let them play truant. Do not fall out with their teachers when they are chastised.

A little child comes into this great world an innocent, helpless, confiding creature, not knowing what to do, where to go, or how to shape its course; and if nobody loves and takes it by the hand, and leads it into good paths, it will stray away into vice and crime and misery.

O parents! love your children; train them up in the good way; teach them to pray as soon as they can lisp the Saviour's precious name. Take them with you to the house of God; bless them with a good home, and when they go out from your humble roof, let your prayers call down upon their heads heaven's constant benedictions.

LECTURE IX.

WORK.

COME to speak to you this evening about work; yes, work, good, honest, hard work. Do not turn away, and say you will not hear me, — that you know all about it, and that it is not a good subject for a lecture.

Listen! The very first verse of the Holy Bible tells us that God is a worker, — that in six days he made all this great world on which we dwell, and the sun and moon and stars.

All the holy angels in heaven are very busy. They go forth to do the will of the Great Being, and find their greatest bliss in action.

Good and great men are all hard workers. And do you know what it is that makes a free state so rich and strong? It is, above all things save God's blessing, *patient, honest work*.

There is nothing degrading in *free* labor, — nay, it is most honorable. Why, when

God placed Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden, before either of them had ever done any wrong thing, and while they were as pure as the angels, he made gardeners of them. He required them to dress the garden and keep it nice and in good condition.

The blessed Saviour himself worked at the bench, at the carpenter's trade, until he was about thirty years of age.

And yet, some very silly people are above work, — are ashamed to have hard hands, — and do their best to get through the world without honest toil.

But this was not the case with Abraham Lincoln, the man who wrote the Proclamation of Emancipation. He used the hoe, the ax, and the maul, cleared ground, and fenced it with the rails he had split, and was ready to turn his hands to any honest work.

I know that it is quite natural that you should associate work with slavery, and freedom with idleness, because you have seen slaves working all their lives, and free people doing little or nothing. And I should not

blame you if you should ask, "What have we gained by freedom, if we are to work, work, work!"

Now, let me explain. A slave works all his life for others. A free man works for himself, — that is, he gets pay for his labor; and if he saves what he earns and manages well, he can get on so well that he may spend the afternoon of his life in his own pleasant home, and never want for any thing.



DICK SLACK'S HOME.

LECTURE X.

FREE LABOR.

I HAVE already spoken of the difference between slave labor and free labor; but I wish to dwell upon the subject more at length. I was myself brought up to hard work from my very childhood, and I am not speaking to you upon a matter that I know nothing about. No, my friends, I love work, and nothing would be a greater punishment to me than enforced idleness. I would rather work ten days than to be idle one day.

Now free labor does not imply that you may perform your work irregularly, carelessly, and dishonestly; and that your employer must put up with it, and say nothing about it. When you were a slave, it may have been your habit to do just as little as you could to avoid the lash. But now that you are free, you should be actuated by a more noble principle than fear.

A free laborer should rise early, shake off sloth, step lively, and apply himself to his task betimes. A sluggard turns his lazy body in his bed when the sun peeps in at the window, and the birds are singing, and says, — “A little more sleep, a little more slumber.” When he rises he mopes about, half awake, looks as dull as a mummy, stands half bent, and goes to work as a felon goes to prison. No one wants him in shop, or on his farm. He earns little, and poverty makes a prisoner of him.

LECTURE XI.

CONTRACTS.

ONE of the first things to which the attention of a freedman is called, is a *contract*. You have all heard a great deal about contracts, have you not, since you have been free? A contract is something which binds two or more parties. For example, John and Mary agree together to get married. John promises Mary, and Mary accepts John. That is a marriage contract. Again: John Doe agrees to give Richard Roe fifty dollars for a month's work. That is a contract for labor; and, if Richard Roe performs the labor, John Doe must pay him.

Contracts are very numerous; numerous as the leaves on the trees almost; and, in fact, the world could not get on at all without them. I will notice the various kinds of contracts.

1. There are what are called *implied* con-

tracts — as, for example, if the baker leaves a loaf of bread at your house every day, and you take the bread, there is an implied contract that you will pay for it, and the law will make you pay for it, although you never said in *words* or in *writing* that you would pay, or that you wanted the bread.

2. There are also *verbal* contracts. These are the most common of all. A man tells you he will pay you a dollar for a day's work, or twenty dollars for a month's work, and you reply that you will do the work for the pay, — that is a verbal contract. By mere words or verbal agreements all manner of goods are bought and sold, and all kinds of labor employed and jobs done. A man's word should be as good as his bond or his oath; and men generally do tell the truth and stick to their engagements.

3. There are, besides the two kinds of contracts named, a third kind, called *written* contracts. It is better to have all important bargains written down and signed by the parties, and that binds them; and if there should

be any dispute about what was agreed to, the paper can be produced and read, and that settles the whole matter.

You ought to know, too, that some agreements are of no legal force unless they are written down. No one can buy land and hold it on a verbal or implied contract. He must have it written down, signed, and witnessed. And a lease of land, for three years or more, must be in writing. This is the law, and it was made to prevent frauds.

Now I wish to impress upon you the importance of complying strictly with your contracts.

1. *Regard for your word requires it.* When you make a contract you pledge your word and honor that you will do as you agree, and when you break a contract through dishonesty, idleness, or neglect, you dishonor yourselves.

2. *Respect for the rights of others, requires it.* When a contract is violated, damage is usually done to the other party, and if he has

a mind to do it, he can sue the unfaithful party, and make him pay for his bad faith.

3. *Self-interest demands it.* No man can succeed in any business, or labor, long after it becomes known that he does not come up to his promises. It is much better, in the long run, to live up to a hard contract than to break it, for the credit acquired thereby overbalances the loss.

LECTURE XII.

DISHONESTY.

I BEG leave to invite your most earnest attention to the subject of this evening's lecture, because it is fraught with the highest interest to you, and your children, and your children's children.

A snake is the best type of dishonesty. For this reason the enemy of all good is called a serpent, — "that old serpent, the devil." It was in the character of a serpent that he went to Eve in the garden of Eden, and, by artful words, persuaded her to look at the forbidden fruit, to desire it, and then to steal and eat it. The devil is a cheat, a liar, and a knave; in his very nature the very personification of dishonesty.

There are numerous kinds of dishonest men in the world. One is a gambler, another a thief, a third is a swindler. One steals your goods under cover of law, another under fair

pretense of honorable dealing, a third by the boldest knavery.

Society is infested with sharpers, and now that you are free, and have a little money in your pockets or a little property at your disposal, they will watch you with keen eyes, and rob you if they can.

You must not think that dishonesty is confined to one class or color or party. There are many dishonest Yankees and loyal men; dishonest Southerners and disloyal men; dishonest white men, and black men; and you will find dishonesty in some instances crawling about in the holy garb of philanthropy and religion.

But it is my object in this lecture, not so much to put you on your guard against knaves, as to give you some hints which will enable you to avoid the evil and to be honest yourselves, for "An honest man's the noblest work of God." There are many fruitful *causes of dishonesty*, and I will call your attention to a few of the more common.

1. *Slavery.* All agree that slavery fosters lying and stealing. In all countries and in all ages these vices have prevailed among slaves. But, as slavery has been forever abolished in this country, that cause has been removed, although the effects have not ceased.

2. *Poverty.* Extreme poverty subjects the poor to the temptation of theft. Agur prayed that he might not be reduced to poverty lest he should steal and take God's name in vain. If a man is hungry and has nothing to buy food with, or is shivering with cold and has nothing to buy wood or clothes with, he will be tempted to steal.

3. *Idleness.* This is the most common and the most culpable cause of dishonesty. "An idle man's head is the devil's workshop." The idle man tempts the devil to tempt him. He sits by the wayside, and, as the old Evil One passes, he says to him, "See here, have you no job for me?" And the devil soon finds him a job. Now, if you desire to do the dirty work of Satan, quit work and hang around the street corners and drinking saloons and

groceries. You will soon have your hands full! If you wish your children to spend their lives in jails and workhouses, or to end their days in the prison or on the gallows, bring them up in idleness. Whenever you allow your children to loiter about, with nothing to do, you advertise them for the devil; you say, in effect, "Here, Satan; here are hands for you!"

Oh, my friends, it is a sad thing to see a child die, to fold its cold hands over its still bosom, to close for ever its dear eyes, to kiss its sweet lips whose prattle has been music in your ears, to bend over its little coffin and gaze upon that matchless beauty in death, —

"Before decay's effacing fingers

Have swept the lines where beauty lingers,"

and to see the coffin-lid closed, not to be opened again; but I would rather every one of my children should die and be buried thus, than that they should be raised in idleness, and thus be exposed to dishonesty.

LECTURE XIII.

RECEIPTS AND EXPENDITURES.

IF you earn twelve dollars in a month, and spend thirteen, you are on the road to misery, for you will get into debt, deeper and deeper, until after awhile it will be a load you can not carry.

You should make it a rule, therefore, to spend less each month and each year than you make. If you do this, you will become well to do in the world.

A free man should always consider before he buys an article, whether he can afford it. He would like a new hat, — price five dollars, — but if he needs the five for other and more pressing uses, to make a payment, for example, for something he has bought, then he should deny himself the pleasure of the new hat, and brush up the old one. A new coat might be very desirable, but if its purchase would create a debt, better keep the old one

in good repair as possible, and stick to it another season. It is much pleasanter to wear the old clothes than to have the constable chasing you in the new ones.

Many a poor man has been driven almost out of his wits by constables, who were pursuing him for the payment of debts made to gratify the vanity of his wife. She wanted a handsome breastpin, and begged him to buy it. He could not resist, and bought it with the proceeds of a week's hard toil, and, as a consequence, was obliged to go in debt for meat and bread. Then she wanted a fine dress; then this, and then that; and so he sank into debt, step by step, until he was ruined.

A wife can soon destroy her husband's good name, by urging him to buy for her things she could do without, and for which he is unable to pay.

It is a good plan for a man and woman who are just setting out as you are to make a living, to balance their accounts—that is count up what they earn and what they spend, and see how they compare—a great many

times in the year. It will not take them long to do it, and the task will be both pleasant and useful.

Resolve that you will, by the blessing of God, live within your means. This is one of the most important secrets of success. It may cost you a struggle, but stick to it resolutely, and the day will come when you will be able to purchase not only the necessities, but the luxuries of life.

I am not counseling you to be mean and stingy,—by no means; but no man has a right to be liberal with another man's money and at another man's expense.

For the sake of your good name, do not make a splurge in society with jewelry and fine clothes which have not been paid for, and for which you will never be able to pay. That is almost as mean as theft.

"The borrower," says the Bible, "is servant to the lender," and, let me assure you, a creditor is a very hard master. Do not put your necks in his iron yoke.

I am acquainted with many white persons

who commenced married life twenty-five years ago with as little as you have now, and who worked with their hands for less than is given to you, who are now owners of handsome houses and farms, and are in very easy circumstances. They made it a rule to spend less than they earned.

LECTURE XIV.

HOMES.

I THINK God intended that every man should have a place on the earth which he might call his own, upon which to establish a home for himself and his family. He made the world very large, and from age to age is increasing the breadth of dry land. Innumerable little creatures toil night and day to build up foundations for islands from the bottom of the sea, and the busy waters carry from the mountain sides rich earths, to fatten and extend the land. Nature is not stingy. She has homes for all!

Now, I come before you this evening to turn your thoughts, if possible, with intense force to this subject. In my very heart I pity the man who has never had a home.

A homeless child! Why, the angel of mercy weeps over it. And who so exposed, so unhappy as a woman who has no home!

Hood describes a poor girl who had thrown herself in the river because she had no home and could find no one to take her in. Looking at her beautiful form as she lay dead upon the bank of the stream, he said, —

“Was it not pitiful?
In a whole city full,
Home she had none.”

Heretofore, you have had no opportunity to provide homes for yourselves and families. You were liable to be removed at any time, and it was impossible for you to keep your families together. But all that is now changed; and, if you have the mind to do it, you may in a few years own a piece of ground and a good house. In many places lots may be purchased for from fifty to five hundred dollars, and land for from one to thirty dollars per acre. A little economy and well-directed industry will enable you to make a purchase, and to become a freeholder.

Now, as soon as you have a house of your own all paid for, you are, comparatively, an

independent man. No one can make you move away. You need not ask permission to live and die there. You command the situation. You own all that is under your ground to the center of the earth, and all that is above you to the twinkling stars.

I advise you to imitate the German people. They live close and work hard until they get good homes, and that makes them a thrifty, happy people. You scarcely ever see a German beggar. And, if you take the advice I have given you, we will see few negro beggars in the United States twenty years hence.

But I wish to give you a hint or two about your home after you have it.

It should be comfortable. It is better to make it tight and warm than waste fuel in keeping it heated.

It should be kept clean. Filth breeds sickness, and invites into your house the most fearful contagions.

It should be beautiful. The great God loves beauty, and so he stoops down and

paints all the little flowers, and every thing he touches is beautiful. The beauty of the Lord appears in all his works, and he is pleased with us when we see and admire it. Many people have a mistaken notion of beauty. They confound it with pride and vanity, and talk and act as if a religious person should be as rough and as ugly as possible. What a sad mistake!

Now, make your homes as pretty as possible. A little paint, a little whitewash, a few yards of paper, some gravel walks and a few flowers, make all the difference in the world in the appearance of homes.

Have you ever seen Dick Slack's home? Let me describe it. It stands on a bare lot. The fence is down, and much of it, to tell the truth, has been used for kindling. The pigs root around his door and sleep under his house. No flower blooms about his dwelling, no green plat of grass spreads its charms before your eyes. His house is innocent of paint or whitewash, and from one window

the crown of an old hat sticks out, from another a pillow!

And Dick is like his house; see him standing there, motionless as a post, half bent, with his hands in his pockets. Oh, Dick, stir yourself! Put up a nice fence about your dwelling. Go put glass in your windows. Grass, flowers, gravel, and whitewash are cheap.

Let us take a walk over to Paul Thrifty's. Ah! we are there. Open the pretty gate. Listen to the hum of the bees. They know where to find the flowers. See! that is a humming-bird sipping daintily from the sweet honey-suckle which Mrs. Thrifty has trained by the side of the house. You walk on a clean pavement. Paul meets you at the door. His hand is hard but his heart is warm. His wife is clean, his children sweet, and every thing has an air of comfort.

Paul has a home! He loves it. His voice goes up to God in prayer for his blessing in his household. The good angels hover over the place. All the covenants of promise are

his. And his children may wander to the farthest verge of the green earth, but their hearts will go back to the dear old home, and their memories will recall the wise counsels, the solemn warnings, and heartfelt prayers of the parental fireside.



THE WAY OF TRANSGRESSORS IS HARD.

LECTURE XV.

CRIME.

I MUST speak a few earnest words to you, this evening, on a subject which should engage your most serious attention.

An artist saw a beautiful child, — and nothing on earth is so beautiful as a child, — and he painted it upon canvas, and hung the picture in his studio, and named it “Innocence.” Sweet, smiling, happy innocence!

Many years afterwards the same artist visited the cell of a notorious criminal, who had been sentenced to expiate his crimes upon the gallows. He was prematurely old; vice had marked his features with deep lines. His look was fierce as a wolf’s. He appeared to be more a demon incarnate than a man, and yet there was in his face a look of inexpressible grief. The artist painted him also, — painted all the lines of vice and shame, mal-

ice and sorrow, and, placed beside the pretty child's picture, called it "Crime."

What a contrast! but he afterward learned that the pictures were taken from the same person, — that years of crime had transformed the child he had named "*Innocence*," into the wretched man he had called "*Crime*."

My friends, such transformations are going on every day all over the world. Crime not only corrupts men's hearts, but it paints their vileness in their faces, and advertises them to men and to angels. Satan himself was once an angel, shining like a star in the heavens, but crime took from him his crown of glory and robe of light, and made of him an angel of darkness. A man may be gifted, learned, and wealthy, but if he is addicted to any vice all these blessings will be transformed into curses.

Now I want you to fix it in your minds that *crime and misery go hand in hand*. They never can be separated, for the great God has linked them together.

Before any one commits a crime he is

always tempted to believe that he will escape punishment. But, when the deed is done, he is placed in a new relation to himself and to all other beings. He is a criminal. He is condemned at the bar of his own conscience. His sleep becomes troubled. His imagination tortures him with frightful images. He looks suspiciously upon all men. He is without a friend on the earth, for he must keep his own horrible secret. He is constantly afraid of detection. He watches, feverishly, every stranger who approaches him, fearing he is a police officer about to arrest him. The very means he takes to avoid discovery leads to his detection, and at last he is arraigned and punished, for "Murder will out." The world is full of telldales. No man can escape punishment. Sleepless, stern Justice, with drawn sword, follows the guilty wretch day and night, in summer and in winter, over land and sea, and, when the time arrives for his execution, cuts him down.

Oh, my friends, no man can tell the depth of human misery. Thousands and thousands

whom we suppose to be comparatively happy have a worm gnawing at their heart; and, in the still watches of the night, they meditate upon the wrongs they have done, toss upon their restless beds, and wish they had never been born.

Now if you wish to build upon the solid rock, to be on good terms with yourself, to be able to look every man in the face, and to have peace with your God, keep yourselves pure. Avoid all vice, and especially all those things which are forbidden by the wholesome laws of society.

Let no man deceive you by plausible promises. Scorn the gambler, the thief, the wretch who carries concealed weapons, and values not a human life. Be law-abiding, law-loving men, for I tell you again that it is the saddest thing in the world to be a wrongdoer, to go through life like a beast of prey, and to have one's death-bed haunted by accusing angels. And then, "The wrongs men do in this life live after them."

LECTURE XVI.

RELIGION.

I AM not a preacher by profession, but a simple, unpretending layman; but I can not close this series of lectures without having a plain talk with you about religion. It is a subject in which I have felt a deep interest from my childhood. My mother was a widow, and was reduced by misfortune to extreme poverty, and I can remember when all the food we had in the house was on the table, and we knew not where the next meal would come from. But my mother trusted implicitly in God, and we were never obliged to beg bread. When I was a little boy only nine years old I was bound out to a farmer, gathered up my little bundle of clothes, and went from my mother's home to live among strangers. But my mother followed me day and night with her prayers; and, although I am now a man, and have been a good deal in the

world among men, I can never get away from the Christian influence of my mother. I love Jesus, — have loved him from my childhood, and find my greatest happiness in his service. I trust therefore that, in speaking to you upon the subject of religion, I am addressing you upon a theme with which I am somewhat acquainted. But the subject is vast, and I can only touch upon a few points.

We read in holy Scripture of a man named Jacob, who, when he was young, set out to visit his uncle's house in Padan Aram. When night came on he was in the desert alone, and he slept on the ground with a stone for a pillow; and while he slept he dreamed that he saw a ladder set upon the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven!

Blessed vision! Human existence is not confined to this world. The Bible teaches that the soul is immortal; that there is a bright and beautiful world above this one on which we fight the battle of life, and that there is a ladder, — a plan of salvation, —

accommodated to our weakness, upon which we may climb to heaven!

Blessed revelation! Under its glorious light life assumes unspeakable value. And is it possible that I shall live for ever? And has the great Being not only endowed me with immortality, but given me capacity to improve and increase in wisdom and goodness and happiness for ever and for ever? Is it possible for the humblest and most sinful man to be pardoned, washed in the blood of the Lamb, redeemed and glorified; to be placed in the firmament of heaven, and shine there as a star with forever-increasing splendor?

Then it would be folly, wickedness, nay, *madness*, for me to confine my thoughts and aims to this life alone. If I am to live for ever I should spend this life with respect to the immortal existence with which the good God has endowed me.

Man was made to be a religious being, to know, love, and obey his Creator; and he can never be truly happy in sin. All experience proves this to be true. Divine love is the

natural element of the soul, and when out of this element unrest, nay, misery, is a necessity. It can not be otherwise while his being remains what it is. A fish sports with delight in its natural element, the clear, cold water. It is not afraid of the deepest water. It glides through it with pleasure, and rejoices in existence; but, when thrown out upon the beach, it gasps and dies. The bird, on the other hand, was created for the air. It spreads its wings and mounts up toward the sun, sings its sweet songs, and warbles in the tree-tops. But it can not live in the water with the fish.

Now God has given to each of us such a nature that we can only be happy when we are good; when we dwell in the love of God, and walk in the light as he is in the light. No man can change his own constitution, and therefore, while God is sovereign, good men will be happy and bad men will be miserable.

The *Bible* is God's written word, and it is his will that it should be circulated among all men, and be read in all languages: for it

is a revelation of the Divine Will, not to one race, or to the people of one color or clime, but to *man*.

I earnestly counsel you, therefore, to read this holy book every day of your lives. If you have never learned to read, apply yourselves to study until you can read the Bible. No man, under forty years of age, should think of getting through life without ability to read a book which God has taken the pains to prepare for him. If you are too old to learn to read, then require your children and your grandchildren to read it to you. A Bible-reading people are always a free and happy people.

I advise you *to be liberal-minded toward other Christian people*. You are divided up among a number of religious denominations, — as Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterian, and Episcopalian, — all of which have their excellent qualities, and all, perhaps, some weak points. Now each one has a perfect right to his own preference, and no one should attempt to force his religious views upon

another. Love your own church, and do your very best to make it strong. But use fair means. Let it not grow up in fraud, but in truth and goodness, and then the glory of the Lord will shine into it.

In one army there are numerous regiments, each having its own name, and all under one common leader or commander. Some fight in close order, others in open order. Some use artillery, others small arms. One regiment is mounted, another on foot. Now all have a common cause, a common enemy, and there should be but one purpose, — to serve the common cause and overthrow the common enemy. So in the great army of Christians. It is divided into numerous denominations, and has various modes of warfare; but there should be no bitter rivalry; no intestine feuds; no turning of hostile bayonets upon each other. This is the greatest folly and wickedness.

Be liberal, then. Take your Christian brother, of whatever name, and work heartily with him in the promotion of every good work.

Join all your strength against the common enemy, and you will achieve glorious victories. One shall chase a thousand, and two shall put ten thousand to flight. An old hymn contains a good prayer.

“Help us to help each other, Lord,
Each other's cross to bear ;
Let each his friendly aid afford,
And feel his brother's care.”

Let your religion be characterized by charity toward all men. When religion does not make men kind and tender-hearted it is, evidently, false and spurious, no matter how pretentious it may be. Let me read to you, from the best of all books, a parable spoken by the Great Teacher, which illustrates, with a beauty and power never surpassed, the true idea of practical Christianity.

“A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. And by chance there came down a certain

priest that way and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was; and when he saw him, he had compassion on him, and went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said unto him, "Take care of him: and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again I will repay thee."

Now, to love God aright, is to do as the good Samaritan did, to "Go, and do thou likewise."

The same Great Teacher gave to us all a beautiful and touching example of the spirit which should influence us in the choice of the work of life. On the same night in which he was betrayed, he took a towel and girded himself, and a basin of water, and washed the dusty feet of his disciples, and wiped them dry with the towel. Then he asked them if

they understood what he meant to teach them by this example. "If I, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet. If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them."

The idea is this: that a good man is happy in performing the humblest services required by the necessities of his fellow-beings. He is willing, if need be, to wash the feet, to bathe the brow, to moisten the lips, or to sit all night by the sick-bed of the humblest man.

It is not the work, so much as the spirit which you take to it, which pleases God. And

"Far better in its place, the lowliest bird
Should sing aright to him the lowliest song,
Than that a seraph strayed should take the word,
And sing his glory wrong."

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